U.S. Spy Business Vital To Survival in Hostile Era

from the Kansas City Star

Glamorous female spies, tapped wires, furtive meetings in the dark and all-around mysteriousness are commonly associated with the word "intelligence." But this subject—of life-and-death importance to any great nation—involves far more than the cloak-and-dagger adventures of espionage agents. It covers an enormous array of fact-finding techniques, coupled with ordinary common sense, to arrive at conclusions.

The fundamental purpose of all intelligence work is to obtain information as a basis of possible action. Fifteen years of the cold war have provided numerous illustrations of its use. The most striking recent example came last fall in connection with the Cuban crisis, when the United States was placed on alert against the nearby build-up of Soviet rockets and troops.

In this instance, the intelligence process began with a sober study of the length of a pavement brick in Moscow's Red square. The brick provided a measuring rod for photographs of Russian rockets displayed in the annual May day parade through the square. Thus it became possible to compute the exact dimensions of these weapons.

This information was on tap. So was the knowledge that Soviet and American designers are subject to identical laws of physics and aerodynamics. Consequently, our specialists were able to calculate the probable thrust and range of Soviet rockets. Photo - interpreters were armed with the data they needed in studying aerial [illegible] later the Russians backed down, with a pledge to remove the missile threat. This emergency was on its way to being solved.

These details are recited to show the importance of a thorough intelligence evaluation, and how it can shape national policy.

The great sweep of intelligence has been explored by a leading American authority, Allen Dulles, in the April issue of Harper's magazine. Dulles, for eight years chief of the Central Intelligence Agency, bases his book-length article on nearly half a century spent in the fields of diplomacy, espionage, counter-espionage and the clandestine side of foreign affairs." To the Kremlin he was America's master spy in the 1950s. But he actually seems to have been more a philosopher-craftsman in the art of gathering and interpreting information, in order to guide national policymaking.

Dulles concedes that errors of omission and misjudgment sometimes occur in the intelligence process. But he also maintains that it is often impossible to give credit where credit is due. He explains:

"Whenever a dramatic event occurs in the foreign relations field—an event for which the public may not have been prepared—one can usually count on the cry [illegible] been mistaken about the role of intelligence in certain situations. Without going into details, he refers to the Bay of Pigs episode in 1961. Dulles denies that the botched invasion was predicated on a wrong estimate that this landing would touch off a general revolt in Cuba. But Pentagon officials have asserted, privately, that the invasion did, in fact, carry such an assumption.

Dulles does not claim that [illegible] intelligence services are infallible. Indeed, he insists that "the intelligence process of making estimates will never become an exact science." (More frequently Dulles uses the term "craft" to describe intelligence.) Moreover, members of the profession can never be "automated" out of business. Mechanical minds may help sift great masses of information, much of it as routine as a railroad timetable or a road map. But the final evaluation must be made by mere men with all of their prejudices, emotions and vested interests.

> **The Enduring Word**
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> Therefore turn thou to thy God: Keep mercy and judgment, And wait on thy God continually. Hosea 12:6

The C.I.A. evidently has performed its most effective service in searching out vital information that would have remained hidden otherwise. It has appeared at its worst in attempting to direct the course of events in places like Laos and Cuba. Sometimes the C.I.A. finds itself in the middle. Then the agency simply manages as best it can.

In this light, Dulles discusses the ruckus over the "so-called missile gap." He explains that in the late 1950s [illegible] the C.I.A. itself, than to the Dulles' record as its director.

When the C.I.A. has gotten into hot water, it has been primarily to miscalculations in attempts to execute policy. Notable examples were the Bay of Pigs episode and the 1960 effort in Laos to replace a doubtful neutralist, Prince Souvanna Phouma, with Gen. Phoumi Nosavan, chiefly because he was the most anti-Communist of Laotian leaders. The facts that Nosavan was politically [illegible] and that his army was ineffectual were not sufficiently taken into account. The net result produced a severe setback to the interests of the United States and its allies.

Some members of congress have exhibited concern over the C.I.A.'s ventures into foreign policy. They have asked for more legislative surveillance, which is now minimal. But each time that a congressional watchdog has been proposed, the majority of lawmakers have voted against it. A strong case can be made to the effect that very close supervision would hamstring the C.I.A. in the essential job it has to do. Moreover, allied intelligence services might be wary about entrusting their secrets to the C.I.A., lest a congressional leak whsiper it to the world.

Budget funds for the C.I.A. are hidden in allocations for other government agencies and departments. Total appropriations are never disclosed. But Dulles suggests that the common estimate of $1,000,000,000 a year spent by the C.I.A. represents an inflated guess.

Shifting from the budget to philosophical grounds, Dulles asks this question:

"Is it necessary . . . for the United States with its high ideals and its traditions to involve itself in espionage . . . to send U-2s over the other people's territory, to break other people's coded messages?"

What it all comes down to, [illegible] performed [illegible] cover fashion. The ordinary rules do not apply. It is a matter of self-defense and national survival.

Always, Americans live uncomfortably with the thought that spying on other countries has become a basic element in the structure of their government. But it is, and will be, basic as long as this country is up against both military and subversive threats. As Dulles observes in his [illegible] re- [illegible] "[illegible] danger." In- [illegible] a present- [illegible] means for keeping [illegible] the peril.